DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 345 642 HE 025 537

TITLE Racial and Religious Tensions on Selected Kansas College Campuses.
INSTITUTION Kansas Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights.
PUB DATE Feb 92
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Campuses; Colleges; Community Problems; Crime; Higher Education; *Incidence; Racial Attitudes; *Racial Bias; Racial Discrimination; *Racial Relations; *Religious Conflict; *Religious Differences; School Policy; Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Kansas

ABSTRACT

A fact-finding meeting on racial and religious tensions on college campuses in Kansas was held, with participation by community leaders, college and university officials and instructors, law enforcement officials, college students, and community relations experts. Topics covered were the extent of the tensions; likely causes of the problem; and administrative, community, media, law enforcement, and institutional responses. The following findings and recommendations were developed: (1) university and college administrations are more reactive than proactive; (2) higher education institutions should develop effective and clear policy statements that address bias-motivated incidents; (3) college and university programs pertaining to minority student concerns are academically oriented and lack an emphasis on campus support systems designed to facilitate new and different living environments; (4) college administrators should provide appropriate and creative student support systems for racial and religious minority students; (5) some victims of bias-motivated incidents are reluctant to report their complaints through the college's formal complaints system, while others lack knowledge about the system; (6) institutions should review existing complaint systems; (7) conflict among groups has been heightened by competition for perceived limited resources; and (8) administrators must provide leadership that promotes harmony. (JB)

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# Racial and Religious Tensions on Selected Kansas College Campuses

ED345642

**Kansas Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights**

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**February 1992**

*A report of the Kansas Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights prepared for the information and consideration of the Commission. This report will be considered by the Commission and the Commission will make public its reaction. The findings and recommendations of this report should not be attributed to the Commission but only to the Kansas Advisory Committee.*



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## THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The United States Commission on Civil Rights, first created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, and reestablished by the United States Commission on Civil Rights Act of 1983, is an independent, bipartisan agency of the Federal Government. By the terms of the 1983 act, the Commission is charged with the following duties pertaining to discrimination or denials of the equal protection of the laws based on race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, or in the administration of justice; investigation of individual discriminatory denials of the right to vote; study of legal developments with respect to discrimination or denials of the equal protection of the law; appraisal of the laws and policies of the United States with respect to discrimination or denials of equal protection of the law; maintenance of a national clearinghouse for information respecting discrimination or denials of equal protection of the law; and investigation of patterns or practices of fraud or discrimination in the conduct of Federal elections. The Commission is also required to submit reports to the President and the Congress at such times as the Commission, the Congress, or the President shall deem desirable.

## THE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

An Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights has been established in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 105(c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and section 6(c) of the United States Commission on Civil Rights Act of 1983. The Advisory Committees are made up of responsible persons who serve without compensation. Their functions under their mandate from the Commission are to: advise the Commission of all relevant information concerning their respective States on matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission; advise the Commission on matters of mutual concern in the preparation of reports of the Commission to the President and the Congress; receive reports, suggestions, and recommendations from individuals, public and private organizations, and public officials upon matters pertinent to inquiries conducted by the State Advisory Committee; initiate and forward advice and recommendations to the Commission upon matters in which the Commission shall request the assistance of the State Advisory Committee; and attend, as observeers, any open hearing or conference that the Commission may hold within the State.

## Letter of Transmittal

Kansas Advisory Committee to the
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

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Wilfredo J. Gonzalez, *Staff Director*

The Kansas Advisory Committee submits this report, *Racial and Religious Tensions on Selected Kansas College Campuses,* as part of its responsibility to advise the Commission on civil rights issues within the State. This report includes findings and recommendations.

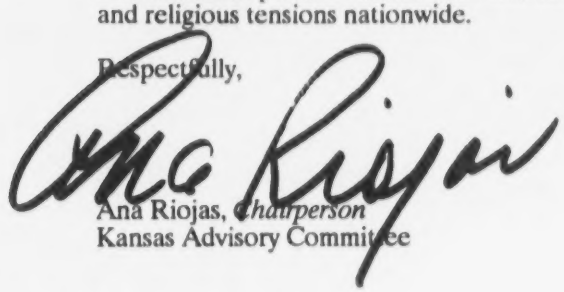
The Advisory Committee and staff of the Central Regional Office held a factfinding meeting on April 26, 1990, in Topeka, Kansas, to obtain various perspectives and facts on racial and religious tensions on selected Kansas college campuses. Those invited to participate included community leaders, college and university officials and instructors, law enforcement officials, college students, and community relations experts. Since this report is based on the factfinding meeting record, those persons who participated in the meeting were given an opportunity to review relevant sections of the transcript. Where appropriate, comments and corrections indicated by them were made.

Among the findings and recommendations of this report, the Advisory Committee notes that university and college administrations in Kansas tend to be more reactive than proactive to bias-motivated incidents, specifically when there are student protest demonstrations on campuses. The Advisory Committee recommends that Kansas higher education institutions develop effective and clear policy statements that address bias-motivated incidents on their campuses and provide for a quick response to such incidents.

Further the Advisory Committee notes that student victims of bias-motivated incidents are reluctant to report their complaints through the college's formal complaint system. The Committee recommends that Kansas higher education institutions review existing complaint systems for receiving and following through on reported bias-motivated incidents to determine if a more effective channel is needed. The institutions should seek student input for such a review.

Although the report does not reflect an exhaustive analysis of the subject, the Committee hopes the Commission will find it of value in its monitoring of racial and religious tensions nationwide.

Respectfully,



Ana Riojas, *Chairperson*
Kansas Advisory Committee

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**Was not a member of the Advisory Committee at the time of the study.

**Acknowledgments**

The Kansas Advisory Committee wishes to thank the staff of the Commission's Central Regional Office for its help in the preparation of this report. This report was written by Ascension Hernandez with assistance from Kerry Morgan and Melvin L. Jenkins. Support services were provided by Corrine Sanders. The report was prepared under the overall supervision of Melvin L. Jenkins, Director of the Central Regional Office.

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# I. Introduction

Racial and religious tension on college campuses is a serious concern that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has monitored over the past years. The Commissioners have played a leading role in calling for the enactment of legislation requiring the establishment of a national system to collect data on crimes motivated by bigotry. On April 23, 1990, President George Bush signed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act that requires the U.S. Attorney General to collect statistics on hate crimes.[1]

In July 1988 the Commission passed a resolution encouraging its State Advisory Committees to review the subject of bias-related violence, especially on college campuses, as part of their broader inquiry into hate crimes.[2] The Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, in August 1988, conducted a community forum on bigotry and violence.[3] The forum's summary report included a description of a bias-motivated incident on a college campus that included a quick, positive response by the college administration resulting in beneficial policy changes.

In response to the Commissioners' resolution, the Missouri and Nebraska Advisory Committees also conducted community forums on bigotry and violence on college campuses.[4] At its March 1989 planning meeting, the Kansas Advisory Committee selected a similar topic. The information that follows was provided by 19 participants and recorded at the Advisory Committee's factfinding meeting.[5]

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1 Hate Crime Statistics Act, Public Law 101-275, 101st Congress (1990); see also USCCR Clearinghouse Publication 96, *Intimidation and Violence: Racial and Religious Bigotry in America* (September 1990), chap. IV, p. 23.

2 USCCR Resolution, July 1988. A Minneapolis Police Department order describes a bias-related incident as any offense or unlawful act based on a victim's race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation as a bias-motivated incident. *Special Order, Minneapolis Police Department,* No. S 87-013, June 11, 1987. See also below, pp. 23-24.

3 Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence in Minnesota* (October 1989).

4 Missouri Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence on Missouri's College Campuses* (1990); Nebraska Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence on Nebraska's College Campuses* (April 1990).

5 Transcript of factfinding meeting conducted by the Kansas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, April 26, 1990, Topeka, Kansas.

## II. Extent of the Problem

In an effort to acquire firsthand knowledge of bias-related activities on selected college campuses, the Kansas Advisory Committee invited students, faculty, and administrators of colleges who might be knowledgeable or involved in bias-motivated incidents. As one indication on the extent of the problem, the Advisory Committee requested appropriate participants to provide information on the number of bias-related incidents received by their organizations.

William Whitcomb, a conciliation specialist with the Community Relations Service (CRS) of the U.S. Department of Justice, Region VII, Kansas City, Missouri, described the activities of groups with white supremacist philosophies that have emerged on college campuses nationwide. He related that the rise in racial and religious tensions on college campuses has been manifested through incidents involving cross burnings, racist and religious graffiti, and the distribution of leaflets.[1]

Mr. Whitcomb noted that the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) has used lawsuits, asserting freedom of speech and assembly, with reference to campus appearances. Other related groups have held rallies and marches near campuses to spread their philosophy in the community and at colleges.[2] CRS has found that group rallies and the counter-group protests generally are the triggering mechanism that move university officials to review or examine their policies and programs that deal with discrimination and minority group students.[3]

According to CRS' experience, minority members of the university community are concerned about recruitment and retention of students, housing, employment, and academics. The objective of minority student groups on campus is to create an environment that is friendly and conducive to learning with appropriate support systems from college officials that indicate an interest in the student as an individual.

The increase in bias-related incidents, as indicated by Mr. Whitcomb, calls for a solution and action to counter the negative and intimidating aspects of bigotry and potential violence brought about by the actions of hate groups. There were 23 bias-motivated incidents reported on Kansas college campuses for the 5-year period from 1984 to 1989.[4]

Mr. Whitcomb, however, noted that some incidents were unreported due to threats, intimidation, poor knowledge of the university complaint system, and minorities' lack of confidence and trust in institutional responses to bias-related complaints.[5] He reported that in past years, law enforcement agencies (including campus police) have treated bias-motivated incidents as pranks or routine misdemeanors. CRS has encouraged law enforcement agencies to establish procedures for officer training in identifying and responding to bias-related incidents.[6]

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1 Transcript of factfinding meeting conducted by the Kansas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, April 26, 1990, Topeka, Kansas, p. 17 (hereafter cited as *Transcript*).

2 *Transcript*, p. 18.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p. 23.

5 Ibid., p. 24.

6 Ibid., p. 25.

Dale Cushinberry, a former administrator at Washburn University in Topeka, and now a principal at Whitson Elementary School in Topeka, noted that most higher education institutions have a mission statement that declares a goal of diversity. He noted, however, that somewhere between the statement and the underrepresented students entering and graduating from these institutions, a tremendous erosion of the commitment to diversity takes place.[7] With reference to the rise in racism, Mr. Cushinberry described 17 different incidents that occurred at different campuses in all parts of the United States. He contends that the campus environment plays a major role as to whether perpetrators of racially motivated incidents will feel comfortable in elevating racial and religious tensions.[8]

Steve Ramirez, an education specialist with the Kansas Commission on Civil Rights, told the Advisory Committee that, with reference to the Hispanic student in Kansas, he was aware of two reported incidents on college campuses.[9] Most of the Hispanic college students he has talked to have experienced a degree of discomfort because they feel unwelcome on Kansas college campuses. This feeling carries over to the extent that upon receiving their college degrees, some Hispanics are ready to leave the State. Mr. Ramirez recommended more input from Hispanic community organizations to colleges and universities on Hispanic students' needs.

Daveen Litwin, the director of B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, an organization for Jewish students at the University of Kansas (KU), told the Advisory Committee that during her 4 years as director of the Hillel House, she has seen an increase of psychological and physically violent anti-Semitic acts. In most instances, the incidents were reported to the university officials, but some incidents go unreported. She said there have been 18 documented cases (by Hillel) of anti-Semitism during the academic year 1989-90 at KU.[10] Ms. Litwin gave an account involving a Jewish female student, who was referred to as "JAP" or "Jewish American Princess." This is considered an anti-Semitic and sexist slur.[11] The female student, who lived in a university residence hall, encountered hate messages on three different occasions. One message read "f...ing JAP." The second message read, "die JAP," accompanied by a swastika. The third message received 10 days later, handwritten on her door next to a swastika symbol, read, "Hello again JAP, I want to kill you and make your skin into a lamp shade." Also another sign on the hall bathroom door read, "JAPs will die in hell."[12] There were similar messages in at least 15 other locations in the same residence hall. This graffiti and vandalism of the residence hall had specific life-threatening, anti-Semitic, sexist messages that, according to Ms. Litwin, were not investigated by university officials until 4 days after the incidents occurred.[13] Ms. Litwin was concerned that no fingerprints or photographs were taken nor was extra security provided for the victim by the campus police.[14]

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7 Ibid., p. 88.

8 Ibid., pp. 96-97.

9 Ibid., p. 124.

10 Ibid., p. 153.

11 Ibid., pp. 153-156.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid. The campus police gave a different explanation of the investigation. Chief Jim Denney of the K.U. campus police told the Advisory Committee that he took exception to the allegation that the investigation into the incident was conducted days later. He said that because the incident occurred on a weekend, the formal investigation may have started 4 days later. He emphasized that the investigation was started as soon as the weekend was over. *Transcript,* pp. 231-33.

Ms. Litwin stated that Jewish students at KU are exposed to anti-Semitism and hatred from other students because of their culture and religion. She noted that Jewish students endure humiliation from an administration that responds slowly to complaints as well as degradation through slurs and swastikas from perpetrators. Further, she related that the Jewish students who endure anti-Semitism harden themselves to it and survive it, at Lawrence and elsewhere. Sometimes, Ms. Litwin commented, Jewish students survive these attempts at the expense of their identity.[15]

Ms. Litwin reported that a survey was conducted among Jewish students on campus as to a perceived rise in anti-Semitism. The survey indicated that 72 percent of those surveyed reported hearing or witnessing anti-Semitic remarks or actions. Although the university may have rules and regulations for formal complaints, she said that the students must decide whether or not to report an incident.[16] Ms. Litwin remarked that the development of student support groups has been the most constructive response to anti-Semitic and racist incidents. These groups are putting pressure on KU officials to respond to those types of incidents.[17]

She said, "The strongest hope for the future is that the students are finding strength and courage together, in order to continue to struggle for a supportive and inclusive educational environment."[18] Ms. Litwin noted that it takes more than films, panels, and statements to overcome bigotry. Toleration and nonviolence must be taught and not just advocated.[19]

Dr. David Katzman, a professor of history at KU and a target of some anti-Semitic threats, does not believe that racism is on the rise as much as the pressure is off people to suppress their biased feelings. The tendency for this freedom of expression takes on a snowballing effect and racism is perceived to be on the increase.[20] Dr. Katzman, however, noted that the real problem of racism and anti-Semitism on the campus is the inadequate response by university officials to incidents,[21] but he did not offer any suggestions as to what the administration should do.

Eladio Valdez III, a member of the Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO) at KU, believes that there has been a rise in racial tensions on college campuses, and he gave three reasons for the increase. First, the youth of today are brought up not being knowledgeable of different cultures or are exposed only to the white male perspective. Second, there has been a swing or change in the social environment: in the 1960s and 1970s, Americans were challenged to examine their value system and attitudes toward different races. According to Mr. Valdez, today we have not looked at ourselves or our attitudes towards different races and the result is racial incidents. His final explanation was that the conservatism that became prominent in the Reagan era benefited only the majority white population, and this kept a stranglehold on all the vehicles of progress for minorities.[22]

Mr. Valdez described a personal experience in his Spanish language class in which the instructor made several insensitive remarks. In one instance the instructor told the students in

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14 Ibid., pp. 155-56.
15 Ibid., pp. 156-63.
16 Ibid., p. 162.
17 Ibid., pp. 162-63.
18 Ibid., p. 164.
19 Ibid., p. 165.
20 Ibid., p. 175.
21 Ibid., p. 169.
22 Ibid., pp. 253-54.

the class that they would have an advantage over other students taking German, Italian, or French, because Hispanics are invading America. The second remark was on how to use your Spanish when interacting with Mexicans. A letter of complaint was written to university officials and to the chair of the Spanish language department to sensitize them to a problem area. The instructor later apologized to Mr. Valdez.[23]

In preparation for the Advisory Committee forum, Mr. Valdez surveyed part of the HALO membership in order to assess the extent of bias-related incidents at KU.[24] Generally the responses to the survey did not deal with bias-related incidents, but with jokes or stereotypical remarks about Hispanics. However, the students reported that they had no knowledge of where to report bias-related incidents.[25]

Lawrence Thomas, a student from Washburn University and president of the Black Awareness Council, described a racial slur he and three other black students heard during a winter intersession class. An adjunct professor in criminal justice was telling her students how happy she was to have a Federal job because of the many fringe benefits and special holidays she could get off, like Martin Luther "Coon" Day. She corrected herself and said Martin Luther King Day. When the four black students asked the instructor about her comment, she apologized and said she was speaking too fast and did not mean to say it. She also agreed to apologize to the class the next day, but the incident was also reported to university officials. Administration officials interviewed her and recommended a workshop (sensitivity training) for her. Mr. Thomas reported that many persons thought the university's response was appropriate, but he felt that a more severe sanction was needed to send a message to faculty and staff on such behavior.[26]

In discussing campus life, Mr. Thomas believed that minority group members generally did not feel comfortable working in student government affairs, on the yearbook, or with the school newspaper staff. He further noted that there are perceptions on campus that white Greek organizations control student activities and that minorities are not welcome to participate. Consequently, very few minority students make the effort to participate in those activities.[27]

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23 Ibid., pp. 255-59.

24 Ibid., p. 259.

25 Ibid., p. 260.

26 Ibid., pp. 306-08.

27 Ibid., pp. 321-23.

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23 Ibid., pp. 255-59.

24 Ibid., p. 259.

25 Ibid., p. 260.

26 Ibid., pp. 306-08.

27 Ibid., pp. 321-23.

## III. Likely Causes of the Problem

Has there been an increase in racial and religious tensions on college campuses in Kansas? Participants at the factfinding forum were asked to provide information on the number of incidents and the reasons they believe that bias-motivated incidents were occurring.

Dr. William M. Tuttle, a history professor from KU, explained how the roots of today's campus ethnoviolence problems were planted years ago. He believes that professors and scholars have been responsible for racist, sexist, and xenophobic ideas. Dr. Tuttle reasons that throughout America's history, up until the 1960s, scholarship has been dominated by white males. These white men were responsible for writing a racist history of American slavery and the Reconstruction period. They also wrote a racist history of immigration to the United States and a sexist history of American women.[1]

According to Dr. Tuttle, the unfortunate aspect of the writing of this racist history, or this view of America's past, is that it dominated the teaching of history and shaped white opinion because of its inclusion in the public schools' history courses. He felt that some scholars' views—that Reconstruction was a tragic mistake—were partially responsible for a lack of civil rights legislation between the years 1875 and 1957.[2] Dr. Tuttle also said that in his opinion historical scholarship, until recently, was xenophobic, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and anti-black.[3]

Dr. Tuttle pointed at two events in the 1920s that supported discriminatory public opinion. One was the rise of the Ku Klux Klan membership across the United States as well as in Kansas. Second was the National Origins Act of 1924, which absolutely prohibited any Asian immigration to the U.S. and significantly precluded immigration from southern and eastern Europe.[4]

At KU policies that were racist in nature were instituted and in effect during the 1920s. Dr. Tuttle reported that the university had a swimming requirement that was waived for blacks, to keep them out of the swimming pool. Blacks were not allowed to participate in intercollegiate athletics, the glee club, the band, the debate team, and the student council. Black students could not attend university dances and usually sat in segregated areas during concerts, basketball games, and similar activities.[5] The university cafeteria had a Jim Crow section.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s inspired many young historians to write African American history, the history of women, and the history of a great variety of ethnic and religious groups. This new perspective on history is now beginning to reach undergraduate students. The writing of ethnic history has changed, but at the same time the United States has witnessed another new immigration to this country, which includes record numbers of people of color representing Indo-China, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. During the

1 Transcript of factfinding meeting conducted by the Kansas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, April 26, 1990, Topeka, Kansas, pp. 43-48 (hereafter cited as *Transcript*).

2 *Transcript*, pp. 46-48.

3 Ibid , p. 49.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

1970s, the U.S. absorbed 4 million immigrants and refugees, and perhaps twice as many undocumented persons.[6]

Dr. Tuttle believes that current university professors must be in the forefront in the efforts to assure that a proper history is written and imparted about immigrants in Kansas. Some of the new immigrants are now in colleges and universities, and there has been the perception as well as actual incidents of racial and ethnic hostility, anti-Semitism, and sexism on campuses across America. This bigotry on campus, Dr. Tuttle reports, is demonstrated through letters to the campus newspaper that complain about the effects of affirmative action on white persons.[7]

Even with the new writings about the accomplishments of racial and religious minorities there are still signs of racial, religious, and ethnic hostility. According to Dr. Tuttle, some people believe that this increase may be due to the Iranian crisis from 1979 to 1981 that gave rise to the free expression of bigotry. Others may argue that the Reagan era of the 1980s was a time of indifference to the disadvantaged person.[8]

Mr. Whitcomb stated that among the perpetrators of racial-ethnic conflict on campus is the white student union. On a national basis, this group has targeted not only colleges and universities but high schools as well. The White Aryan Resistance (WAR) group has promoted a youth component that has given rise to a Neo-Nazi Skinheads movement with a network throughout the States. According to reports received by CRS, the Skinheads movement has members ranging from ages 12 to 24 years.[9]

Mr. Whitcomb said that racial conflict has emerged on campuses as a result of either local or national trends. This conflict is most likely to appear at colleges where minority staff and students have raised concerns about recruitment, retention, housing, academics, or employment.[10]

Mr. Cushinberry quoted an article in *Black Issues in Higher Education* in explaining some of the causes for tension on campus. One reason given was that "naive and insensitive actions towards minority groups were the basis of the problem."[11] Secondly, he reported that the article described a national climate of frustration with affirmative action that infiltrated campuses; this coupled with the increased number of minority students who have enrolled in predominantly white colleges since the 1960s are all presenting more opportunities for the occurrences of racial incidents.[12] However, Mr. Cushinberry believes that affirmative action offers an excuse for racism that is already in the individual.[13]

Dan Wildcat, a sociology instructor at Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, made a statement about the nature of discrimination as he described the all-Indian student population at Haskell. While the students are a homogeneous American Indian group, they are also a very heterogeneous group representing many tribes from at least 38 States and all regions of the United States with the same problems and issues of discrimination found in other institutions. The one difference is that Haskell's mission encourages students to know their history, to recognize and to be educated about the kind of ethnic diversity there is among American Indi-

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6 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
7 Ibid., pp. 55-56.
8 Ibid., p. 56.
9 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
10 Ibid., p. 19.
11 Ibid., p. 98.
12 Ibid., p. 97.
13 Ibid.

ans, and to become part of a multicultural group on campus and in mainstream society.[14]

Mr. Wildcat believes we should get away from the historical notion in American education of a Eurocentric view, of a homogeneous society, of a value system that excludes the multicultural perspective.[15] He related the debate that is taking place in the academic community regarding the teaching of history. He said the mainstream notion of teaching American history, especially about how the West was won, seems to eclipse other experiences that are a part of that history, the experiences of blacks, Chicanos, and indigenous persons.[16] He believes many institutions of higher learning are presenting a very narrow perspective that the history of America started with its discovery by Christopher Columbus.[17]

Mr. Wildcat links the rise in ethnic and racial tensions on campuses to a life chance theory that correlates to one's socioeconomic status in society.[18] The rich have gotten richer and the bottom 20 percent of society has gotten poorer.[19]

Mr. Wildcat spoke of a polite racism beyond the campus that exists in the Lawrence community. When Indians go shopping, clerks literally follow them around the store as if all Indian students are there to shoplift.[20] Mr. Wildcat spoke of a community problem that involves the American Indians' relations with the police. The perception by a female Haskell student is that the police will conduct an unnecessary major search of cars driven by Indians whenever they are stopped, something that does not happen to a KU student.[21] There were also the deaths of three young Indian men within an 18-month timeframe that prompted inservice training to sensitize city employees to the concerns of the Indian community.[22]

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14 Ibid., pp. 189-93.
15 Ibid., p. 194.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., p. 196.
18 Ibid., p. 197.
19 Ibid., pp. 197-98.
20 Ibid., pp. 202 and 210.
21 Ibid., p. 203.
22 Ibid., p. 204.

# IV. Administrative Responses

Whenever there is a bias-motivated incident on campus or in the community, the victim generally suffers some type of emotional stress. When there is violence involved in the incident, generally there is a violation of a city ordinance or a campus policy that would require a response by the law enforcement officials or college administrators. The Kansas Advisory Committee invited law enforcement officials, community organizations and agencies' personnel, and college and university officials to provide information and share experiences on what the institutions have done in the past and how they attempt to prevent incidents on their campuses or communities in Kansas.

## Community Response

Dr. David Katzman, a KU professor and a Jewish community leader, stated that one of the most difficult things to do is to have a close friend start to tell an ethnic joke and have to interrupt a pleasant social exchange and tell this friend that some jokes are unacceptable. He said that, in essence, our society needs to be watchful so that we can create an environment that is free of racist communications. It means an institutional commitment that currently is missing at many universities. Dr. Katzman believes that the faculty at KU must be convinced that they cannot offer a first-class education unless the university is multiracial, multicultural, and multireligious.[1]

Joe Douglas, Jr., a retired fire chief and a former member of the Topeka Board of Education, emphasized that the factfinding forum's topic is extremely vital and that information on it was disturbingly abundant. He stated that it is essential that the universities' administrative staff develop policy statements with regard to racial and religious incidents that occur on campuses.[2] He is concerned that the bigotry manifested on the campus is simply an extension of the same practices that exist in elementary and secondary schools.[3] Bigotry, he suggested, is part of the community's attitude that allows bias-motivated incidents to occur everywhere, not just on college campuses.

Mr. Whitcomb said that law enforcement officials have to be more sensitive to reports of bias-related incidents and these have to be treated differently from routine criminal offenses. Law enforcement agencies must start to train officers to identify these kinds of incidents. He further related that college and university officials must set the standard for a healthy climate of racial and ethnic intergroup communications.[4]

Mr. Whitcomb reported that in response to the rise in the number of hate crime incidents, his agency has established a toll-free telephone for filing complaints and requesting assistance. The telephone number is 1-800-347-HATE.[5]

Daveen Litwin praised the alliance of student organizations that have been advocates of the victims of racist acts. Students and Community Against Oppression and Racism (SCAOR) was

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1 Transcript of factfinding meeting conducted by the Kansas Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, April 26, 1990, Topeka, Kansas, p. 178 (hereafter cited as *Transcript.*)

2 *Transcript,* p. 138.

3 Ibid., p. 147.

4 Ibid., p. 25.

5 Ibid., p. 28.

created in response to the Ku Klux Klan's visit at KU in 1987. It later became a proactive group called Celebrate Diversity. Another group, Students Concerned About Discrimination (SCAD), has pressed the administration to address concerns of minority students.[6]

## Media Response

Dr. Ted Frederickson, a professor at the KU School of Journalism, provided information on the media and its role in the coverage of civil rights issues. Dr. Frederickson stated that journalists have played an important role in covering the struggle for civil rights. During the 1950s and 1960s, many courageous journalists went to the South to cover the stories of incredible violence and racism practiced on people of color by public officials.[7]

In Topeka, Kansas, journalists wrote about the courageous struggle by blacks to acquire equal access to public education. Dr. Frederickson believes journalists should provide the information on what is said and done by public officials and not judge them. The idea of a code of silence among journalists came up when Dr. Frederickson published the account of a racist joke by the former director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.[8] He was criticized by his colleagues for writing the article revealing the comments.

Professor Frederickson believes there is no overt racism at KU. He believes the university is committed to affirmative action and to diversity. Instead of white student union groups at KU there are people who sneak around at night and scratch swastikas on doors, write racial epithets on dorm and bathroom walls, and tell jokes to each other in the privacy of their own houses.[9]

Racism is extremely difficult to write about, however; Dr. Frederickson said that journalists must take that indepth look and report the concerns in race relations, searching beyond the bias-motivated incident.[10] He supports writing and discussion of racial issues. He supports freedom of expression and is against any prohibitions of racist speech or punishment for racist slurs because it keeps one from knowing and dealing with the issues. To do otherwise would keep racism in the closet where one cannot see it or deal with it.[11]

## Law Enforcement Response

Jim Denney, the director of campus police at KU, said that, upon request, he works with the Lawrence police regarding bigotry and violence in situations involving off-campus living areas. His department's primary jurisdiction and function is to deal with violations of State and local laws that occur on campus, and the enforcement of the student judicial code and university regulations.[12]

The KU police department, although not required to, does make a distinction between bias incidents and other types of crimes.[13] Chief Denney reported that the campus police have tracked bias incidents reported to them since January 1987. Since that time, through May 1990, 10 bias incident cases were reported, of which five involved harassing phone calls; two, vandalism; two, batteries; and one, an assault. A further breakdown of the cases show that three involved anti-Semitism, two involving the same

6 Ibid., p. 163.
7 Ibid., p. 107.
8 Ibid., pp. 109-12.
9 Ibid., p. 116.
10 Ibid., pp. 108-13.
11 Ibid., pp. 117-23.
12 Ibid., pp. 215-17.
13 Ibid., p. 217.

victim; five involved black male victims, three involving the same victim; one involved an Oriental female; and one involved a white male victim. Chief Denney reported that bias-related incidents are thoroughly investigated and steps are taken to resolve the matter.[14]

One of the problems in reporting bias incidents is that there is no recognized definition nationwide. Chief Denney noted that for his campus police the definition used is similar to an element of the crime of assault; if it exists in the victim's mind, then it exists. The chief explained:

If the victim believes that racial or ethnic prejudice was a motive underlying factor in this particular crime, then we [KU police] consider it a bias crime and we [KU police] handle it as such.[15]

Ron Olin, the police chief for the city of Lawrence, stated that law enforcement is called daily to deal with hate-motivated crime because hate is implied in virtually all crimes against persons and many property-related crimes.

He related that the city of Lawrence has such a diverse population that a survey revealed that a police officer would have to speak 57 languages if the officer were to communicate in the individual citizen's native language. Chief Olin reported that the Lawrence police have handled white versus black, black versus white, Palestinian versus Jew, Skinhead versus Skinhead, Satanic criminal activity, Indian versus black, Asian versus black, black versus black, Indian versus Indian, and other combinations of hate-motivated activities.[16]

The police department, in order to provide better police service, focuses on the education and supervision of its police officers. The city sponsors a police academy that far exceeds the State's requirement of 360 training hours for police officers. Both the academy training and the inservice training focus on hate motivation and sensitivity to diverse populations.[17]

## Institutional Response

Dr. Raymond Spring, vice president for academic affairs at Washburn University, stated that 11 percent of its student population are racial and ethnic minorities, that is, black Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans. Racial and ethnic minorities are also about 11 percent of the faculty. In response to a racial slur incident by an adjunct instructor, the administration initiated a seminar dealing with cultural diversity for employees on a voluntary basis. The evaluation of the seminar was good, and the student government will incorporate the training into its annual business planning meeting.[18]

Dr. John Schuh, the associate vice president of student affairs at Wichita State University (WSU), described the university as a commuter school with a student profile that includes a median age of 28.2 years, average credit hour load of 9 hours per semester, and generally not the traditional undergraduate student in the 18- to 22-year-old category. He stated that there have not been any overt bias-motivated incidents reported on campus; however, there have been some concerns about the condescending attitude of classroom instructors.[19] The president of WSU appointed a commission on crosscultural assessment to check the university's ability to respond to the needs of its various racial and cultural student populations.[20]

14 Ibid., p. 218.
15 Ibid., p. 219.
16 Ibid., pp. 238-39.
17 Ibid., pp. 242-43.
18 Ibid., pp. 326-29.
19 Ibid., pp. 341-44.
20 Ibid., pp. 345-46.

Dr. Susan M. Scott, associate dean of student life at Kansas State University (KSU) at Manhattan, described two racial incidents that occurred during the previous year (1989) that were publicized in the press and involved students from KSU. One incident dealt with profanity written on a local tavern's stationery and displayed by the management at the tavern. This profanity was demeaning to Hispanic students who were celebrating San Juan night, a cultural holiday, at the tavern. One of the victims, a Rhodes Scholar, reported the incident to the press. The university began negotiating with the tavern owners to settle the complaint. A promise was made by the tavern management but was not implemented with reference to the suspension of the manager/perpetrator.[21]

The second incident involved a public chant at a basketball game using the name "Buckwheat," which had racial overtones towards basketball players from a visiting team playing at the KSU arena. This action created a negative climate that offended persons of color. A positive response to that incident was the development and change of a racial and ethnic harassment policy that specifically addresses bias-motivated harassment that was not in the previous policy statement.

In addition, KSU conducted a year-long study on minority student retention. The document indicated that 60 percent of the minority students surveyed believed that they faced more social or cultural difficulties than other students, but minorities found the faculty to be more sensitive to their needs than white students. The survey further revealed that 19 percent of the minority students polled would definitely select KSU as their school of choice, 38 percent would probably select KSU, and 43 percent were undecided or negative toward KSU.[22]

As a result of the survey, a series of discussions will take place regarding how well faculty members provide for the inclusion of minority concerns and issues in the curriculum that they teach and also how the faculty would create a climate of inclusiveness for minorities in the classroom.[23] The idea here, according to Dr. Scott, is that if an instructor is teaching history, then that person should not simply teach white male history.[24]

James Turner, the affirmative action director at KU, was invited to give the Advisory Committee the university's perspective on racial and religious tensions on campus. He was accompanied by Tom Berger, grievance officer, and Dr. David Ambler, vice chancellor for student affairs.

Dr. Ambler reported that, in response to concerns regarding bigotry on KU's campus, the administration has made a commitment to expand the leadership training for all student organizations in racial and cultural diversity concerns.[25]

Mr. Turner expressed his belief that in some institutions of higher learning there are opportunities to create change for minority students, but that changes are usually made in response to pressure. When the pressure is removed, there is a tendency for institutions to become lax.[26] Mr. Turner believes that pressure is one force that creates action. He notes that the problems of the 1960s remain at KU today.[27]

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21 Ibid., pp. 360-64.

22 Ibid., pp. 368-69.

23 Ibid., p. 377.

24 Ibid., p. 378.

25 Ibid., p. 400.

26 Ibid., p. 423.

27 Ibid., pp. 427-30.

## V. Summary

On some Kansas college campuses there has been an increase in racial and religious tensions as well as bias-motivated incidents. The psychological damage inflicted by some of these incidents described in this report has not all been overcome. The reactions have been mixed. The perception of some participants is that overt bigotry and violence has been acceptable during the recent period of growing conservative politics and the influx of new immigrants to the United States.

Federal legislation was recently passed that requires the collection of hate crime statistics. There is also an initial consensus among several groups monitoring hate crimes as to the causes and solutions to this national problem. The Kansas Advisory Committee offers the following findings and recommendations as an attempt to reduce racial and religious tensions on college campuses in Kansas.

# VI. Findings and Recommendations

The following findings and recommendations are submitted under the provision of section 703.2 (e) of the Commission's regulations, empowering the Advisory Committee to initiate and forward advice and recommendations to the Commission upon matters that the State Committee has studied.

## Finding 1

University and college administrations tend to be more reactive than proactive to bias-motivated incidents, specifically when there are student protest demonstrations on campuses.

## Recommendation 1

Higher education institutions should develop effective and clear policy statements that address bias-motivated incidents on their campuses and provide for a quick response to such incidents.

## Finding 2

College and university programs pertaining to minority student concerns are academically oriented. They lack an emphasis on campus support systems designed to facilitate the vigor of a new and different living environment.

## Recommendation 2

College administrators should provide appropriate and creative student support systems for racial and religious minority students as they make the adjustment and transition to a new way of academic and social experience on the campus.

## Finding 3

Some student victims of bias-motivated incidents are reluctant to report their complaints through the college's formal complaint system. Other members of racial and religious minority groups indicate a lack of knowledge about the complaint system.

## Recommendation 3

Higher education institutions should review existing complaint systems to determine if a more effective channel for receiving and following through on reported bias-motivated incidents is needed. The institutions should seek student input as to such a review and the college's complaint system should be publicized campuswide.

## Finding 4

Conflict with minority student groups on college campuses has been heightened by a competition for perceived limited resources and opportunities and a lack of cultural understanding about each other.

## Recommendation 4

College administrators must provide the leadership and environment that encourages and maintains racial and religious harmony on their campuses.